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Appl. No.: 10/527,341

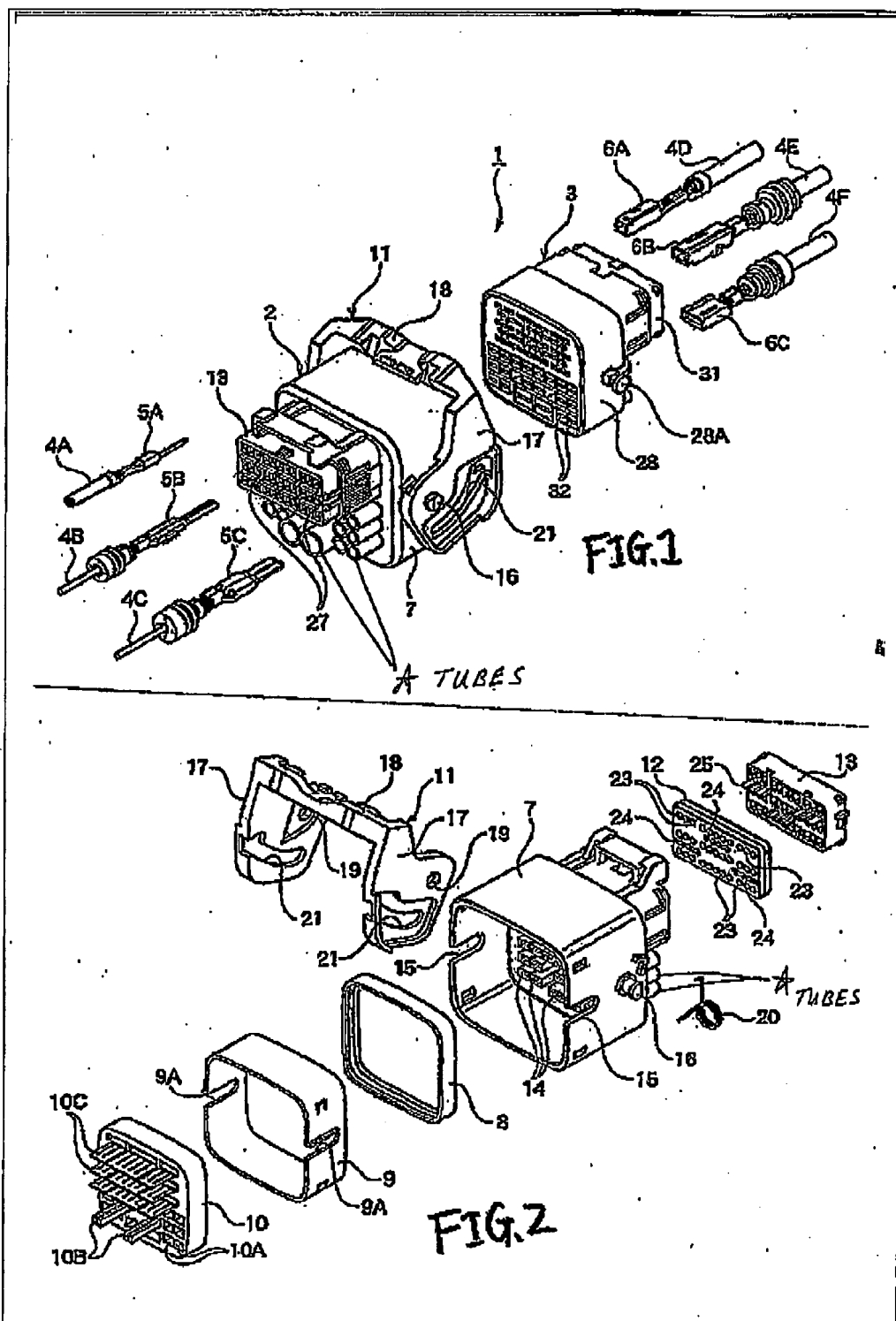
REMARKS

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamai et al. (US 2002/0127912 A1) in view of Makita et al. (US 5,611,706). The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

The claims have been amended above to clarify applicant's claimed invention. In reviewing the office action, it appears that the examiner has misunderstood the teachings in the two cited references.

Fig. 1 of Hamai et al. shows two connectors (2,3) adapted to be connected to each other. Fig. 2 is merely an exploded view of the connector "2" and does not show connector "3". Terminals 6 and wires 4D-4F merely go into the second connector "3", while terminals 5 and wires 4A-4C go into the first connector "2". As seen in Figs. 1 and 2, the seal 12 in the first connector 2 is only for the wires/terminals 4A/5A. The wires/terminals 4B/5B and 4C/5C are inserted in the tubes (unnumbered - see below) which have nothing to do with the seal 12.

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As seen in Fig. 2, the height of the seal 12 is too short to have anything to do with the tubes (it is the same height as the seal holder 13). Thus, it is clearly evident from Figs. 1 and 2 of Hamai et al. that the wires/terminals 4B/5B and 4C/5C (having what appear to be circular seals) are not inserted into the seal 12. Only wires/terminals 4A/5A which do not have additional circular seals are inserted into the seal 12. Figs. 7 and 8 show wires/terminals 4B/5B inserted into the seal 12, but the additional circular seal shown in Fig. 1 appears to have been removed because it is clearly not shown in Figs. 7 and 8. The second connector 3 also appears to have tubes in its housing for the wires/terminals 4E/4B, 4F/6C. The circular seals on the wires/terminals 4E/4B, 4F/6C do not appear to be inserted into the seal 30.

Makita et al. discloses a plug 25 having a seal portion 35 with annular gill-shaped projections 49. "33" is a metal clamp connection portion on the front of the seal portion 35. As explained in column 4, lines 49-54, the seal portion 35 contacts the connector housing 20. There is no disclosure or suggestion of the seal portion 35 being inserted into another seal.

Thus, even if it is obvious to combine the two references, this still does not suggest applicant's invention. Replacing the circular seals on wires 4B, 4C of Hamai et al. with the seal portions 35 of Makita et al. would merely result in the seal portions 35 being inserted into the tubes of the housing 7 of Hamai et al.; not into the seal 12 of Hamai et al.

Claim 1, on the other hand, claims a sealing system comprising a single-unit seal of tubular shape, adapted to be inserted at

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least partially into one of the through-holes of a multi-terminal seal, wherein the through-holes of the multi-terminal seal each have a front part having a section which is adapted to at least partially conform to the single-unit seal. With applicant's invention, a single wire can be surrounded by two seals; a single-unit seal on the wire, and the single-unit seal extending into a multi-terminal seal. This type of arrangement of two seals is not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. The features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though the claims dependent upon claim 1 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claim 11 has been amended to clarify applicant's claimed invention. Claim 11 claims a sealing system including a single-unit seal and a multi-terminal seal. The single-unit seal is adapted to be located in the multi-terminal seal. The multi-terminal seal is adapted to at least partially conform to the single-unit seal. As noted above, nowhere in Hamai et al. is there a disclosure or suggestion of the circular seals (unnumbered) on wires 4B, 4C being inserted into the seal 12. Even if it is obvious to combine Makita et al. with Hamai et al., neither reference alone or in combination suggest locating one seal in another seal. Claim 11, on the other hand, claims that the single-unit seal is adapted to be located at least partially in one of the through-holes of the

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multi-terminal seal, and that the through-holes of the multi-terminal seal each have a front part having a section which is adapted to at least partially conform to the single-unit seal. The features of claim 11 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 11 is patentable and should be allowed.

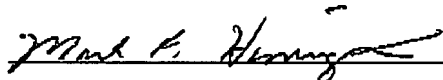
Claim 12 has been amended above to clarify applicant's claimed invention. Claim 12 claims a multi-terminal seal having a plurality of through-holes adapted to receive electrical wires having electrical terminals thereon; and at least one single-unit seal having a general tubular shape. The single-unit seal is adapted to be located at least partially in one of the through-holes of the multi-terminal seal, and the through-holes of the multi-terminal seal each have a front part having a section which is adapted to at least partially conform to the single-unit seal. As noted above, nowhere in Hamai et al. is there a disclosure or suggestion of the circular seals (unnumbered) on wires 4B, 4C being inserted into the seal 12. Even if it is obvious to combine Makita et al. with Hamai et al., neither reference alone or in combination suggest locating one seal in another seal. Claim 12, on the other hand, claims that the at least one single-unit seal is adapted to be located at least partially in one of the through-holes of the multi-terminal seal, and that the through-holes of the multi-terminal seal each have a front part having a section which is adapted to at least partially conform to the single-unit seal. The features of claim 12 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 12 is patentable and should be allowed.

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Claims 13-14 have been added above to claim the features recited therein.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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8/2/07

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